

DEWAN'S REPLY : Mr. Vava Kunju Lebba, in regard to the Holy *Koran*, I talked the matter over with several Mahomedan gentlemen who once waited on me and they agreed to this arrangement : they thought it perfectly unobjectionable that the *Koran* should be kept locked up in a box of which the Judge or the Magistrate will keep the key ; and the box will be brought only if and when it is needed.

In regard to the exemption of Mahomedan women from attendance in courts, there is a provision already in Section 97 of the Civil Procedure Code. It says, " Women, who according to the customs and manners of the country, ought not to be compelled to appear in public, shall be exempted from personal appearance in courts."

As regards the question of totally exempting Mahomedans from attending courts on Friday, I think you will find that the observance all over India where there are even more Mahomedans than in Travancore, is that they get let off for a certain number of hours in the middle of the day; and I am quite prepared to see that it is strictly carried out here. I think that is all you want. I will ascertain what exactly the time is and we shall apply to Travancore what is in force, say in Northern India, if that would suit you. If it does not suit, you can come up again next year.

179. Needs of the Muslims.

MR. P. S. MUHAMMAD (*Member, Municipal Council, Alleppey*) said that the Government should have a more sympathetic attitude towards the Muslims, who were backward in education, for some time to come. In spite of the best efforts of the Government and Muslim leaders, the Muslims in many parts of the State had not taken a keen interest in education. In such places, more departmental schools should be opened. The member was aware that the policy of the Government was not to increase the number of departmental schools. But it could not be expected that the inhabitants of the places above referred to would come forward to open private schools and put up buildings for the same.

In every school in which there were at least 15 Muslim pupils, an Arabic Munshi should be appointed.

At Alleppey, Quilon and other Muslim centres, primary education should be made compulsory as an experimental measure, so far as Muslims were concerned. In the interests of education of the people, the Government should not grudge the additional expenditure involved.

Every year, separate provision should be made in the budget for the promotion of Muslim education and that should be utilised for awarding grants-in-aid to Muslim schools.

The number of special scholarships in Middle Schools should be increased from 8 to 12 and the number of such scholarships in High School classes from 5 to 8. Special foreign scholarships should also be instituted for encouraging Muslims in higher education.

Female education among Muslims was in a deplorable condition. Some of the Muslim leaders were even of the view that educating the females was against their religion. To bring about a change in their mentality was no easy matter. More departmental girls' schools for Mahomedans should therefore be opened in several centres and *Koran* should be compulsorily taught there. The rule that local inhabitants should surrender sites and put up buildings for such schools should not be insisted on in such cases.

Rumours had been afloat that the Special School for Mahomedans at Alleppey was to be abolished because of the paucity of students and in view of the fact that no student had passed from that school in the previous School Final Examination. The member said that it was only two years since the school was raised to a High School, that there were already 129 students there, of whom 20 were in Form VI and that, in the initial stages of a special school, more students could not be expected. As regards the poor examination results, they were brought about by the absence on leave of two chief teachers for a major part of the school-year.

The Shashtiabdapurti medals instituted in memory of His Highness the late Maha Raja had not been awarded for the past four years. They should be awarded to the pupils who deserved them.

In the matter of public service, the Muslims had no sympathisers. For a long time past, they were not at all anxious to enter public service. But since then a few had qualified themselves for public service. All of them should be encouraged by being given suitable appointments. The Muslims were not fairly represented in any branch of the public service. Excepting two or three Police Inspectors, there were no Gazetted officers among them. There was not even a single Muslim officer drawing a salary of over Rs. 175. For want of proper encouragement in Travancore, two Muslims had gone to British India where they were occupying good positions. Excepting a Third Class Magistrate and a Police Inspector, no other Muslim had been entertained in public service since the advent of the present Dewan. Although they were grateful for the two appointments, he could not disguise the fact that they had not yet got fair representation in the public service. A few years ago, when Muslims wanted certain high offices, they were told that there were no qualified men among them. But subsequently qualified men had become available. They should be entertained in service and given suitable appointments. There was not a single Muslim judicial officer even though there were qualified men for holding such appointments. Want of experience should not be a sufficient ground for refusing appointments to them. There were many Muslims eligible for appointment to the subordinate ranks of the public service. But the authorities concerned were not sympathetic towards them and the G. O. and circulars regarding preferential treatment were not strictly adhered to. In some departments, not even a single Muslim applicant had been appointed. Again, in many departments, Muslims were given only acting appointments; and even after 4 or 5 years of acting service they were not confirmed, although in the meantime others had been confirmed and promoted. Transfers from one department to another were sometimes effected. Such transfers adversely affected some officers in their promotions in some cases and led to supersessions in others. As instances in point, the member referred to the cases of Mr. Chandamiah, Retired District Superintendent of Police, and the Canal Officer, Alleppey. The latter was first entertained in the Public Works Department, then transferred to the Police Department as Motor Inspector, in which capacity he won the approbation of his superiors. But with the abolition of that post, he was transferred as Canal Officer. Such transfers affected his due promotion and he had submitted a memorial to the Government, which had not yet been taken up for consideration. It would be an act of injustice done to the Muslim community if his claims were not duly considered by the Government. Another case of hardship was that of a Muslim clerk in the Sub-Registrar's office, Quilon, who had put in a service of about 20 years. Although the District Registrar had recommended him several times for promotion, he had not yet been given any encouragement.

Based on population, the Muslims were entitled to three seats in the Legislative Council. At least two Muslim electorates should be formed for returning two members to the Council.

Bara-wa-fat was the birthday and also the day of demise of Mahomed the Prophet. That was considered as a holy day by the Muslims. It should therefore be declared a public holiday, in view of the fact that similar holidays were being given in respect of the founders of other religions.

Copies of the Holy *Koran* kept in courts were practically of no use. They should be removed from the courts.

A Regulation should be enacted for the safeguarding and the better management of *Wakf* property.

DEWAN'S REPLY: Mr. Muhammad, it is a very long list that you have here. If you will pick out four which you consider the most pressing requests and communicate them to the Chief Secretary, I will have them specially considered.

180. Needs of the Muslims.

MR. K. MUHAMMAD ALI (*Member, Nominated*) said that the mismanagement of *Wakf* properties of the Muslim community in Travancore had